

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS Canberra

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PERSONS NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE, AUSTRALIA, SEPTEMBER 1980 (PRELIMINARY) (Including discouraged jobseekers)

INQUIRIES

If you want to know more about these statistics ring Mr Eric Hubbard on Canberra (062) 526507 or our State office, or write to Information Services, ABS, P.O. Box 10, Belconnen, A.C.T. 2616

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MAIN FEATURES

Note : Survey estimates are subject to sampling variability, as explained in paragraph 11 below.

In September 1980 an estimated 2,834,500 persons aged 15 to 64 years were not in the labour force (i.e. were neither employed nor unemployed). Of these:

2,057,900 did not want, or did not know whether they wanted, a full-time or part-time job.
697,100 would or might have liked a job. Of these:

50,600 had actively looked for work in the four weeks before the interview week but could not have started work in the survey week for reasons other than their own temporary illness.

24,600 had a job but were away from work without pay for 4 weeks or more up to the end of the survey week.

73,700 were discouraged jobseekers, i.e. they wanted a job but had not actively looked for work because they believed that there were no suitable jobs in their locality or line of work, that employers considered them too young or too old, or that they lacked the necessary schooling, experience, etc. (see paragraph 7).

the remaining 548,200 persons had not actively looked for work for the following reasons:

family reasons	215,200
attending an educational institution	119,900
ill health, disability, pregnancy	88,900
had no need to work	56,800
had a job to go to	14,500
no jobs in suitable hours	11,900
other reasons	41,000

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Introduction

In September 1980 a survey, based on the monthly population survey, was conducted throughout Australia in order to obtain information about persons aged 15 to 64 years who were not in the labour force; in particular whether they wanted a job and, if they did, the reason they were not looking for work. Results of similar surveys, the first conducted in November 1975, have been published in *Persons Not in the Labour Force* (6220.0).

2. This publication contains only a summary of the more important results of the survey. More detailed

estimates, which will be published as soon as possible, are available on request. The estimates shown are preliminary and are subject to revision.

3. The survey was based on a multi-stage area sample of private dwellings (about 30,000 houses, flats, etc.) and non-private dwellings (hotels, motels, etc.) and covered about two-thirds of one per cent of the population of Australia. The information was obtained from the occupants of selected dwellings by carefully chosen and specially trained interviewers, the interviews being conducted during the two weeks beginning on Monday, 8 September 1980.

Scope

4. The survey included all persons aged fifteen years and over except:

- (a) members of the permanent defence forces
- (b) certain diplomatic personnel of overseas governments, customarily excluded from census and estimated populations
- (c) overseas visitors holidaying in Australia, and
- (d) members of non-Australian defence forces (and their dependants) stationed in Australia.

Definitions

5. The labour force category to which a person is assigned depends on his *actual activity* (i.e. whether working, looking for work, etc.) during a specified week known as the *survey week*, which is the week immediately preceding that in which the interview takes place. Definitions of the principal labour force categories appearing in this publication are given in *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0).

6. *Persons who wanted a job* are those who were not employed at the time of the survey, and:

- (a) in the four weeks before the interview week had not looked for work but in the survey answered "yes" or "maybe" to the question "Even though you have not been looking for work would you like a full-time or part-time job now?",

or (b) although claiming to have looked for work in the four weeks before the interview week, had not taken active steps (as defined below) to find employment

Active steps to find work include checking or registering with the Commonwealth Employment Service or other

employment agencies, writing, telephoning or applying in person to an employer, answering a newspaper advertisement for a job, advertising or tendering for work, contacting friends or relatives and looking on factory or employment service notice boards.

7. *Discouraged jobseekers* are persons who wanted a job but were not actively looking for work because they believed they would not be able to find a job for any of the following reasons: they were considered by employers to be too young or too old; they had language or racial difficulties; they lacked the necessary training, skills or experience; or there were no jobs in their locality or line of work. This definition has been revised since March 1979. See paragraphs 9 and 10 for the effect of the change.

8. Persons included in the survey who wanted a job but were not actively looking for work were asked to give reasons why they were not doing so. Reasons were ranked in the order of priority shown in Table 2; where more than one reason was given, only the higher or highest ranked has been included in the estimates in Table 2.

Discontinuities in the series

9. Estimates for March, 1979 and earlier periods are not strictly comparable with those obtained from later surveys because the definition of *persons who wanted a job* has been widened to include those persons referred to in paragraph 6(b), i.e. persons who, although claiming to have looked for work in the four weeks before the interview week, had not taken active steps (as defined above) to find employment. Estimates of the numbers of such persons are:

	Males	Females	Persons
November 1975	*	9,400	11,900
May 1977	5,600	14,800	20,400
March 1979	13,300	33,000	46,300
September 1979	9,100	33,400	42,500
March 1980	12,900	39,400	52,300
September 1980	9,600	38,400	48,000

10. Some of the persons referred to in paragraph 9 are classified as *discouraged jobseekers*, the numbers for September 1979 and subsequent periods being:-

	Females	Persons
September 1979	7,200	8,000
March 1980	8,000	9,700
September 1980	5,200	7,100

Corresponding estimates for earlier periods are not available.

Reliability of the estimates

11. Since the estimates in this publication are based on information obtained from occupants of a sample of dwellings they are subject to sampling variability; that is they may differ from the figures that would have been produced if all dwellings had been included in the survey. One measure of the likely difference is given by the *standard error*. There are about two chances in three that a sample estimate will differ by less than one standard error from the figure that would have been obtained if all dwellings had been included, and about nineteen chances in twenty that the difference will be less than two standard errors. A table of estimated standard errors for this survey is shown below. Estimates with a standard error of more than about 22 per cent have not been shown in this publication, as the degree of sampling variability would seriously detract from their value for most reasonable uses. Although figures for these small components can, in some cases, be derived by subtraction they should not be regarded as reliable. More information about this topic will be found in *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0).

Related publications

12. Other ABS publications which may be of interest include:

The Labour Force, Australia (6203.0) — issued monthly

Labour Force Experience During 1979, Australia (6206.0)

Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia, March 1980 (6220.0)

Persons Looking for Work, Australia, July 1979 (6222.0)

Labour Mobility, Australia, February 1980 (6209.0)

13. Current publications produced by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications, Australia* (1101.0) which is available free of charge from any ABS office.

Symbols and other usages

* subject to sampling variability too high for most practical uses. See paragraph 11 above.

n.a. not available

.. not applicable.

14. Because figures have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

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STANDARD ERRORS OF ESTIMATES

Size of estimate (Persons)	Approximate standard error of estimates		Size of estimate (Persons)	Approximate standard error of estimates	
	Persons	Per cent of estimate		Persons	Per cent of estimate
4,500	970	21.6	100,000	3,900	3.9
5,000	1,000	20.0	200,000	5,100	2.6
6,000	1,100	18.0	300,000	6,000	2.0
10,000	1,400	14.0	500,000	7,200	1.4
20,000	2,000	10.0	1,000,000	9,100	0.9
50,000	2,900	5.8	2,000,000	11,000	0.6
			5,000,000	15,000	0.3

**TABLE 1. CIVILIAN POPULATION AGED 15 YEARS AND OVER : EMPLOYMENT STATUS,
SEPTEMBER 1980**

	Number ('000)			Per cent of total		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
Civilian population aged 15 years and over	5,372.1	5,508.9	10,881.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Employed	4,010.0	2,315.3	6,325.3	74.6	42.0	58.1
Unemployed	211.1	194.4	405.5	3.9	3.5	3.7
Not in the labour force	1,151.0	2,999.2	4,150.2	21.4	54.4	38.1
Aged 65 years and over	525.8	789.9	1,315.7	9.8	14.3	12.1
Aged 15 to 64 years	625.2	2,209.2	2,834.5	11.6	40.1	26.0
Inmate of an institution, permanently unable to work, boarding school student	53.0	26.6	79.5	1.0	0.5	0.7
Had actively looked for work but was unable to start a job in the survey week for reasons other than own temporary illness or injury	26.2	24.3	50.6	0.5	0.4	0.5
Had a job but was away from work without pay for 4 weeks or more up to the end of the survey week	7.1	17.6	24.6	0.1	0.3	0.2
Had not actively looked for work	539.0	2,140.8	2,679.7	10.0	38.9	24.6
Did not want a job	412.5	1,621.5	2,034.1	7.7	29.4	18.7
Did not know whether wanted a job	*	19.9	23.8	*	0.4	0.2
Wanted a job	122.6	499.3	621.9	2.3	9.1	5.7
Had taken only non-active steps to find a job (a)	9.6	38.4	48.0	0.2	0.7	0.4
Had taken no steps at all to find a job	113.0	460.9	573.8	2.1	8.4	5.3
Would have liked a job	98.2	384.5	482.7	1.8	7.0	4.4
Might have liked a job	14.8	76.3	91.1	0.3	1.4	0.8
Discouraged (b)	9.9	63.8	73.7	0.2	1.2	0.7
Had other reasons for not actively looking for work (b)	112.7	435.5	548.2	2.1	7.9	5.0

(a) See paragraph 6. (b) See Table 2.

**TABLE 2. PERSONS AGED 15 TO 64 YEARS NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE WHO WANTED A JOB:
REASON FOR NOT ACTIVELY LOOKING FOR WORK (a) AND WHETHER INTENDING TO LOOK FOR
WORK IN THE NEXT TWELVE MONTHS, SEPTEMBER 1980**
('000)

Reason for not actively looking for work (a)	Intention to look for work in the next twelve months				Total		
	Intended to look	Might look	Would not look	Did not know	Males	Females	Persons
Had a job to go to	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	5.6	9.0	14.5
Own ill health, disability, pregnancy	35.9	20.9	28.4	*	33.8	55.1	88.9
Attending an educational institution	80.4	14.5	21.8	*	56.0	63.9	119.9
Had no need to work	12.4	14.5	26.6	*	5.7	51.0	56.8
Family considerations (c)	69.7	44.0	89.3	12.2	*	211.5	215.2
Ill health of other than self	5.0	*	*	*	*	12.7	13.7
Unable to find child care	11.8	6.2	9.6	*	*	28.6	29.4
Preferred to look after children	38.7	24.3	59.4	7.8	*	129.3	130.2
Other family considerations	13.4	8.5	12.1	*	*	34.5	35.3
Discouraged	36.7	15.1	17.6	*	9.9	63.8	73.7
Considered too young or too old by employers	7.5	*	5.4	*	*	14.2	17.5
Language or racial difficulties, lacked necessary schooling, training, skills or experience	6.0	*	*	*	*	9.5	11.6
No jobs in locality or line of work	23.2	10.0	9.9	*	4.5	40.1	44.6
No jobs in suitable hours	6.0	*	*	*	*	11.2	11.9
Other reasons (d)	25.2	4.9	8.7	*	7.3	33.7	41.0
Total							
Males	70.3	19.2	24.7	*	122.6
Females	196.0	97.4	170.5	26.4	..	499.3	..
Persons	266.3	116.6	195.2	29.3	621.9

(a) Highest ranked reason only. See paragraph 8. (b) Intention to look for work in the next twelve months was not asked of persons who were not looking for work because they already had a job to go to. (c) Includes 6,400 females whose spouses disapproved of their taking a job. (d) Includes 6,500 persons who gave no reason.

TABLE 3. DISCOURAGED JOBSEEKERS AGED 15 TO 64 YEARS : SUMMARY OF CHARACTERISTICS

	Females	Persons	Females	Persons
	- '000 -		- per cent -	
Total	63.8	73.7	100.0	100.0
Marital status -				
Married (a)	53.8	58.5	84.3	79.4
Not married	10.0	15.2	15.7	20.6
Age (years) -				
15-19	*	6.8	*	9.2
20-24	*	*	*	*
25-34	12.6	13.7	19.8	18.6
35-44	17.8	18.4	28.0	25.0
45-54	15.1	16.8	23.7	22.8
55-64	11.8	14.1	18.5	19.2
Place of residence -				
New South Wales	23.4	26.1	36.7	35.4
Victoria	17.6	21.5	27.6	29.2
Queensland	8.0	9.1	12.6	12.4
South Australia	5.3	6.6	8.3	8.9
Western Australia	6.0	6.3	9.4	8.5
Tasmania	1.9	2.2	3.0	3.0
Six State capital cities	34.9	41.2	54.7	55.8
Other areas (b)	28.9	32.6	45.3	44.2
Birthplace -				
Australia	41.6	47.7	65.3	64.8
Main English-speaking countries (c)	8.1	10.2	12.6	13.8
Other countries	14.1	15.8	22.1	21.4
Had looked for work in the last 12 months	24.7	31.9	38.8	43.3
Had not looked for work in the last 12 months	39.1	41.8	61.2	56.7
Had never had a regular job	4.5	7.2	7.1	9.8
Had had a regular job	59.3	66.5	92.9	90.2
Time since last regular job -				
Under 1 year	11.8	14.7	18.5	20.0
1 year and under 3 years	13.5	16.9	21.2	22.9
3 years and under 10 years	20.8	21.6	32.5	29.3
10 years and under 20 years	8.5	8.5	13.4	11.6
20 years and over	4.7	4.7	7.3	6.3
Reason for leaving last regular job -				
Dismissed, retrenched	12.4	16.3	19.5	22.2
Seasonal/temporary, went back to school	5.9	5.9	9.2	7.9
Retired, did not need to work any longer	*	*	*	*
Own ill health or injury	*	5.2	*	7.1
Family considerations	18.6	18.6	29.1	25.2
Left to get married	5.7	5.7	8.9	7.7
Left to have children	7.8	7.8	12.3	10.6
Other family considerations	5.1	5.1	8.0	6.9
Travel, changed residence, spouse transferred	8.7	9.3	13.7	12.6
Other reasons (d)	7.0	8.0	10.9	10.9

(a) Includes permanently separated. (b) Includes the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory. (c) Comprises the U.K., Ireland, Canada, U.S.A., New Zealand and South Africa. (d) Includes 4,500 persons whose reason was unsatisfactory work arrangements.